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ABSTRACT

A pre-planned team approach to educational change is described to maximize the chances that education majors and public school students willfully receive the types of improved learning experiences new curricula and organizational innovations promote. Public school and college change agents participating in an action lab sponsored by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development listed 16 impediments to exemplary curricular and organizational change, ranging from the lack of knowledge of how to use and evaluate innovative programs to reluctance to relinquish leadership or influence in an old program to a colleague who will champion the new program. No single person, department, school, or agency can hope to effectively manage all of the components of a major educational innovation. Educational specialists, teachers, principals, student teachers, area supervisors, university and state education department personnel must all work in pre-planned ways recognizing their unique contributions in the process of innovation. Roughly, there are five phases meriting attention in an installation plan: (1) identifying local educational needs and searching for several solutions; (2) deciding on the best solution and how to implement it; (3) gaining wider acceptance of the solution and preparing for use; (4) supporting, monitoring, and maintaining effective, continuous use of the solution; and (5) development of a continuous means of evaluation. (DMT)

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AVOIDING CURRICULAR AND ORGANIZATIONAL WHITE ELEPHANTS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND ON CAMPUS

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Pressure annually mounts on educators to create for public school students and for college education majors more relevant learning experiences which equip preservice teachers with self-esteem, observable skills, and salable competencies. University teacher educators would like to see public schools adopt new inquiry-oriented curricular packages, values-oriented textbooks, culturally pluralistic teaching materials, team teaching, open classroom organization, etc. Public school educators, in turn, clamor for a heavier field experience component in university teacher certification sequences. They want teacher educators to add individualized instruction, large and small group instruction, experience with a rich assortment of audio-visual equipment, career education, firsthand experience with multicultural pupil groups, and non-basal approaches to reading to various required school of education courses. These firing line practitioners also want professors to get out in the schools and reality test pet ideas and touted techniques before championing them on campus.

Usually the university educators and the public school educators go it alone when they undertake innovations in their professional domains. Rarely are innovations in public school organization or curriculum or teaching methodology integrated with accompanying changes in campus teacher training. Site evaluation trips to many field-based teacher preparation projects often are sobering, discouraging experiences. Similar visits to publicized elementary and secondary school change projects are equally disconcerting. The evaluator may not risk audible expression of the following apprehensions, but close investigations of the quality of implementation of campus sponsored projects and public school sponsored innovations repeatedly trigger these questions:

- Is that cooperative school-university student teacher site cluster project, the one you hoped would mature into a teacher center, backsliding to look more and more like "regular" student teaching?
- Do the juniors and seniors "rap" and hold hands rather than use the research, study, and interest center time you programmed into your modular schedule?
- Do your language laboratory consoles rest undisturbed in some corner of your school?
- Are your creative writing efforts and high school humanities programs misty shadows of their originals?
- Are preservice teacher observation/participation experiences in the local high schools unstructured, un-monitored and conflictingly perceived by inservice teachers, preservice teachers, and professors?

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- Have you just never found time to use the new, aesthetically sound, multiple arts curriculum that would upgrade instruction?

- Have the profs disappeared from the field-based effort leaving all the work to graduate assistants who "turn over" annually?

- Do you mean that a science professor, ten very interested teachers, and a summer workshop did not result in the use of inquiry-oriented science materials in Centerville School System?

Most of us, unfortunately, have one or more white elephants gathering dust in a storage closet, file drawer of old proposals, principal's curriculum center, or a college department or division.

The curriculum change and organizational change that we read about, talk about, and pledge allegiance to remains remarkably elusive. Why? A veritable blizzard of educational reform has swept the nation's schools and colleges in the last 15 years. What reasons do various educators who have labored, and continue to labor, to make these innovations successful give for the imperfect success of so many change efforts?

ASCD INNOVATORS COMMENT ON INNOVATION

Teachers, administrators, subject area specialists, university personnel interested in curricular and organizational innovations, and state department consultants participating in a three year, continuing ASCD Action Laboratory made these statements about educational change efforts:

> School districts and schools of education often permit themselves to be pressured into innovation and consequently innovate with too little understanding of the process. Frequently lacking is genuine support of the new program; frequently made are decisions born out of expediency rather than defined instructional priorities and sound educational research.
>
> Repeatedly we fail as educators to include other important, creative people not directly concerned with the implementation of an educational innovation in the discussing, planning, rationalizing, evaluating, and institutionalizing. Parents, public school colleagues, and leadership personnel from colleges and state education departments all are capable of lending needed support whether or not they are directly responsible for the what and the how of pupil learning. (ASCD Action Lab #6, Annual Conference 1972, 1973, 1974).

Certainly these observations by a nationally representative group of change-conscious educators portend the oft unsuspected difficulties encountered in converting the rhetoric of innovation into maximally effective, dramatically improved classroom instruction.

SPECIFIC OBSTACLES TO SURMOUNT

Public school and college change agents participating in ASCD Action Lab #6 listed these impediments to exemplary curricular and organizational change in descending order of importance.

1. Lack of practitioner knowledge of how to use and evaluate innovative programs.

2. Conflicting educational attitudes, beliefs, and preferences among educational role incumbents involved in an innovation.

3. Fear of being incompetent in an innovative program rather than comfortable in a traditional approach.

4. Realization that innovation means more work and additional work is not enticing.

5. Minimal day-to-day communication between the many individuals and sub-groups involved in a change effort.

6. Non-decisiveness of evaluation in that evaluative findings rarely answer important questions but represent much extra work.

7. Insufficient financial resources to support longitudinally the innovative effort.

8. Failure of school and campus administrators to provide leadership for educational innovation.

9. Absence of a representative decision-making process involving various people to be affected by a change.

10. Failure to determine current campus or public school educational needs before selecting an innovation for implementation.

11. Fear that to support an innovation is to admit that the "old way" is a failure.

12. Lack of a specific, detailed strategy for the innovation which clarifies responsibilities and activities.

13. Poor conceptualization and poor design of some innovations.

14. Extreme decentralization and dispersal of decision-making power to the point where no person assumes responsibility for the quality of the effort.

15. Resistance of the citizens of the school community to innovation and/or the cost of innovation.

16. Reluctance to relinquish one's leadership or influence in an old program to a colleague who will champion the new program.

INTERDEPENDENCY AND PLANNING CHARACTERIZED SUCCESSFUL CHANGE

No single person, department, school, or agency can hope to manage effectively all of the components of a major educational innovation. In this age of human interdependency and role specialization, educators are realizing that educational specialists must work together in pre-planned ways recognizing the unique contributions each can make to the process of innovation. Very few change agents exist who would feel comfortable tackling all of the sixteen impediments to innovation just listed.

For an example of an occasion where outside specialist assistance is invaluable, consider one of the greatest threats to educational change -- conflicting attitudes and values of instructors. Some educators are for process; others are for content. Some are for rule-governed order; others are for flexible student self-discipline. Some lean toward the three R's; others long for alternative schools.

Faculty discussions of such educational preferences rarely result in alteration of any individual's basic beliefs. Teachers rarely explicate personal values before peers and refrain from questioning the values of colleagues. However, many of the latest curricular and organizational developments are based on specific sets of emerging educational values. If one believes in a carefully described set of hierarchical learning experiences, each prerequisite to the next, one isn't apt to favor adoption of an exploratory, multiple branched, "generate your own questions" type of social studies or science curriculum. Rarely are these value positions even acknowledged when faculties debate the introduction of a new program. Yet the innovation will be voted in or out on a basis of personal predilections. Principals have been historically timid about bringing up these philosophical issues. Why risk alienating a number of the teachers? Dissension is undesirable, isn't it?

Here is a time when a skilled consultant from a college or an understanding curriculum specialist from the state education department can assist faculty members in clarifying their values, and to compare their educational preferences against the intent and methodology of the proposed innovation. If there seems to be little congruence between the educational beliefs of the prospective implementors and the basic goals and beliefs of the developers of the innovation, this impartial outsider can suggest that innovation be postponed until a more compatible solution to local educational needs can be found.

Innovative curricula such as the *Intermediate Science Curriculum Study* and *Man: A Course of Study* embody bold ideas for education; they represent major breakthroughs in curriculum development. The impact of imaginative programs, however, will be determined by the quality and scope of similarly imaginative designs for moving these curricula from inventors to students and for preparing teachers to utilize them.

Innovation plans must be constructed that provide for the funds, time, materials, wisdom, expertise, training, and flexibility required to neutralize impediments to the success of a selected change. Proponents of secondary school Career Education Programs must enlist the cooperation of local businesses

and industries, procure the goodwill of teachers who may lose instructional time to career education activities, select current and relevant software, and sequence learning experiences in a rational manner among many other installation tasks. Educators introducing sex education into a school's curriculum have goals to articulate, local attitudes and values to consider, support of community subgroups to obtain, teachers to specially train, appropriate teaching methodology to define, etc. The principal who is introducing the Science Curriculum Improvement Study materials into his school certainly must be concerned with inservice preparation of teachers, with time in the day for science instruction, with timely delivery of equipment, with reordering and repair of equipment as needed, with achievement testing to match the nature of the SCIS learning activities, with recognition for the teachers who make the new program work, and with one or more compelling reasons for introducing the program in the first place.

Administrators committed to the implementation of team teaching have parents to orient, special architectural features to provide in the building, changes in teacher recruitment and employment procedures to make, much inservice time to spend on the identification of various instructional functions, and supplementing instructional role definitions to create. If they don't do these things, the innovation may well be "turn teaching" or "departmentalization" rather than team teaching. Bi-lingual/bi-cultural programs present many similar installation challenges: selection of materials, authenticity of materials, roles of paraprofessionals, needed expertise in a native language, etc. Leaders in any of the educational innovation efforts just cited would also be wise to participate in the construction of teacher indices and student indices describing what a sophisticated observer would see in a classroom or school where the innovation was 100% effective.

The failure of new curricula and new organizational structures to reach their full potential is often blamed on shortcomings of their hardware, their software, their complexity, their cost, or their basic psychological undergirdings. More often, these failures are the sour fruit of traditional, unsophisticated, day-by-day generated, crisis motivated, weakly-supported installation strategies. Too seldom is there a comprehensive plan for identifying committed classroom teachers or university instructors and for providing them with the inservice education, consultant expertise, materials, peer support, and recognition essential to major educational change.

> Failure of an innovation is more often caused by the inadequacies of the installation plan than by the nature of the innovation itself. The most common error is to pretend that what ought to happen will happen without much effort on our part. Hence we blissfully over extend ourselves, avoid looking at results with a keen evaluative eye and perpetuate a myth that something better is happening when it is not. (ASCD Action Lab #6)

Five rough phases meriting attention in an installation plan follow. These phases were considered important by ASCD Action Lab #6 members in their daily work as school district change agents or university professors of curriculum and instruction. Under each phase a number of guidelines for innovators generated by the ASCD group are indicated.

Phase I. Identifying the Local Educational Need(s) and Searching for Several Solutions

a. Carry out a needs assessment before an innovation(s) is selected and then maintain needs assessment as a continuing process.

b. Involve a wide variety of people in needs assessment, i.e., teachers, support staff, students, parents, university representatives, community organizations.

c. Translate needs assessments into expected goals with related teacher and pupil performance objectives.

d. Carefully examine all the various "brands" of an innovation currently on the market. Don't hastily endorse the first brand encountered.

e. Make site visits to schools/classrooms where the proposed innovation is understood to be functioning well and eye it critically.

f. Insure that the same instructional objectives can not be achieved by some easier approach and with less expense.

Phase II. Deciding on the Best Solution and Deciding to Implement It

a. Develop and circulate the criteria and processes that will be used in making "go" or "no go" decisions about a given innovation.

b. Insure that all groups that will be affected by the change are represented in the group that selects the solution or votes for its adoption.

c. Provide released time for the decision-making group.

d. Require the decision-making group to communicate continuously with their various constituents.

e. Don't accept or reject a solution on the basis of cost alone.

f. Don't rush either one of these decisions.

Phase III. Gaining Wider Acceptance of the Solution and Preparing for Its Initial Use

a. Provide inservice education before the innovation is to be used and during the initial year of implementation.

b. Provide adequate opportunity for teachers to discuss the rationale of the proposed innovation relative to their own educational beliefs.

c. Give innovating instructors the security of knowing that project failure will not mean that they will be labelled as failures.

d. Instead of trying to get everyone moving at the same time, launch the effort with receptive volunteers.

e. Don't begin the installation process unless all the needed hardware, software, and instructional space is available to teachers.

f. Help the community feel involved by setting up communication linkages to the school so that rumor doesn't control your public relations.

Phase IV. Supporting, Monitoring, and Maintaining Effective, Continuous Use of the Solution

a. Provide teachers with on-going assistance in implementing the innovation (i.e., through observation, co-teaching, exemplary films, rich assortments of materials, etc.).

b. Make use of consultants, central office specialists, demonstration teachers, etc. and create acceptable, widely understood role definitions for these "helpers."

c. Establish qualitative and quantitative instructional goals and talk about the degree to which they are being met throughout the year.

d. Provide for adequate pacing to prevent the change from gaining excessive momentum and becoming unmanageable. Do this by projecting bench marks, check points, and accomplishment levels.

e. Provide non-teaching time for planning, coordination, problem resolution, and sharing of techniques during first year of the innovation.

f. Interest new or non-participating staff members in the innovation and again conduct inservice workshops to prepare them to utilize the innovation. (Too often innovators in the second wave receive no special help or resources.)

Phase V. Continuous Evaluation of the Innovation

a. Evaluation should be decision-oriented; do not collect data which cannot be used to answer some important question.

b. Involve teachers in the development of the evaluation design and in the wording of the evaluation instruments.

c. Insure that evaluation spans enough time to allow the innovation to produce results. Evaluate across more than one cycle if necessary.

d. Do not skew evaluations of innovations to fit instruments designed for old programs.

e. Predict the level of expected (and acceptable) success before implementation. The evaluation plan should be concerned with the achievement of those predictions.

f. Publish all evaluation results, even those that "hurt." Decide in advance how the program will be affected by negative or positive evaluation data. For example, what corrective or reinforcing action will be taken as a result of specified possible evaluation results?

A TEAM APPROACH TO A MAJOR EDUCATIONAL CHANGE

The tasks of installing and monitoring new programs certainly are many and complex. They are of sufficient importance to merit the same extensive

planning and time investment by specialists that went into the program development tasks. Unless implementation tasks can command respect, people, and dollars, some of the finest creations of developers will still continue to become white elephants -- ignored, compromised, dimly-understood, rejected, and hidden in the closets.

It is submitted that team support of a new instructional program can maximize the likelihood that 100% effective installation can be achieved. Inside school districts, personnel in four educational roles have extensive and interlocking influence over the qualitative outcomes of teacher preparation projects, curricular innovations, or organizational restructuring -- the teacher, the teacher-leader, the subject area supervisor, and the principal. University personnel interested in field based efforts which combine teacher preparation with curriculum improvement should involve all four role occupants in the total planning and implementation process. School superintendents interested in building or total district change efforts should do likewise. External to the school district, a college or university professor who is an expert in the selected subject or organizational area and an appropriate specialist from the state education department are additional, desirable, and effective team members. Although perhaps not a "go-to-all-the-meetings" type of team member, a university administrator (department head, division director) who can philosophically and fiscally support the innovation is a critical figure in successful collaboration.

School districts contemplating the introduction of an extensive and costly curricular innovation should never assume that the purchase of new instructional hardware and software, coupled with a few hours of teacher inservice education, will result in exemplary use of the innovation. Nor should a university professor ever assume that a project rationally planned and outlined on paper has any acceptance or impact in the real world. It is wiser to choose a team approach to well planned change, thereby bringing the expertise and enthusiasm of several different educators to bear on the inevitable deterrents which impede all major educational change efforts.

The Teacher

Curriculum change for youth is made by teachers. They are the educators who actually modify their daily behaviors and develop new skills because of the demands of innovative curricula. Ultimately, school boards, administrators, and professors must credit classroom teachers with turning the products of curriculum developers into meaningful experiences for pupils.

Teachers should examine and evaluate alternative curricula and engage fully in the decision process which culminates in acceptance or rejection of a new program. New programs should not be imposed upon the classroom implementors by administrative decree, university solicitation, or by dubious "volunteering" procedures. Since a distinctly innovative curriculum or organizational structure often requires new teaching strategies, rescheduling of professional time, or manipulation of strange equipment, teachers merit a "fail-safe" period during which they can develop confidence in the new program and competence with the strategies and equipment.

In schools where instructional program change or student teaching modifications are most successful, school faculties participate in well organized summer inservice workshops and are reimbursed for their study. Teachers in

these schools are guaranteed that the necessary curricular equipment and supplies will be in their rooms at the proper time, in the proper quantity. They are assured that supportive assistance during the first few months will be provided by consultants and administrators. They expect that university participants who worked on the development of the program will set aside prime time to be in the school buildings to actually assist with project implementation.

The Principal

Informed, concerned principals administer innovative projects in the most successful schools. Principals whose schools make new programs "go" possess a thorough understanding of the innovation's characteristics, philosophical undergirdings, related equipment, and inherent implementation problems. They are acquainted with one or more curriculum consultants and are aware of patterns of consultant-teacher interaction. These principals often teach units from a new curriculum, obtain or maintain equipment, improvise in the face of adversity, and empathize with innovating teachers. If at all possible, these principals attend the same inservice workshop in which their teachers participate and engage in the same preparatory learning experiences. If the project involves student teachers, these principals deliberately become acquainted with these educational neophytes -- with their strengths and weaknesses, needs and contributions. Above all, they provide the leadership needed to insure that continuous communication between all participating groups truly occurs.

The Teacher-Leader

Veteran teachers with knowledge of the school, facilities, administration, faculty, and parents are usually the most successful teacher-leaders. Prepared teacher-leaders have been found to be extremely helpful and encouraging to teaching colleagues who are implementing a new curricular or organizational pattern for the first time. The teacher-leader, if provided with intensive inservice training, and if scheduled to employ the new activities with his own group of students, can bring his own practical solutions of classroom problems to teaching colleagues on short notice. Being in the building daily, the teacher-leader serves as an internal consultant available at the time of need.

Teacher-leaders fit well into emerging concepts of differentiated staffing which stress greater teacher responsibility for instructional leadership. Extremely successful educational installations are often maintained and nourished by peer power - the enthusiasm and expertise of a teacher-leader. In fact, when the Hawthorne effect of the first innovative efforts dissipates, external consultant service is discontinued, and extra supporting dollars disappear, the teacher-leader remains as a steady, ever-present facilitator of the educational change.

The Local Subject Area Supervisor

The local subject area supervisor is a key supporter of innovation. Perceived as a specialist by teachers, his opinions on an innovative program are sought and valued. Expansion of a new program to other grades and other school buildings is often limited in districts where the subject supervisor

is disinterested, hostile to the curriculum, opposed to the time parameters within which a content area must be taught, or omitted from the installation strategy. The content and methodology expertise of the subject area supervisor is a critical factor in effective installation in a single building, in the spread to other buildings, and in the rational articulation of the innovation from elementary to junior and senior high levels. Schools which are successful implementors of new curricula and new organizational structures involve central office supervisors in all installation decisions. They, too, attend inservice workshops with the teachers and prepare to render frequent, pragmatic, supportive service. Remember the associate superintendent for personnel if you are initiating a collaborative teacher preparation program, team teaching, or differentiated staffing. He employs beginning teachers and has some strong beliefs about the ways course work, student teaching, teacher roles, and community experiences should be blended.

The College or University Professor

Professors in appropriate disciplines (subject matter areas) have been identified and employed as potent sources of external consultant service to innovating teachers by school districts where curriculum change is thorough and lasting. A professor-consultant can serve as a coordinator, quality controller, value clarifier, demonstrator, motivator, and provider of information on curriculum content and instructional processes. Regularly scheduled visits weekly or bi-weekly to an innovating school by a professor-consultant greatly strengthen the quality of curriculum installation and insure continuing inservice education experiences for the innovators. When a district is willing to employ an outside expert to systematically assist teachers to solve installation problems, the faculty knows that administrative (and school board) commitment to change is genuine and will be financially demonstrated. When the university is willing to allot a portion of a professor's workload to field support of a school-college endeavor, partnership relationships are demonstrated by that university.

The University Administrator

A professor who desires to invest his time in a collaborative school-college teacher preparation or curriculum change effort must know that university superiors will both count and reward that time commitment. He also must know that the budget-makers in subsequent years will recognize the effort by providing sufficient dollars to sustain it. Strong division or department heads must make timely, favorable workload, recognition, promotion, and budget decisions. Courageous administrators simply must allocate hard money to the new campus programs they philosophically believe in and wean money from conventional or unsuccessful programs in which they no longer believe. Public school administrators annually have to face this choice. They don't finance a new math curriculum and continue to finance the old one too. If the university is to initiate an innovation, administrative leaders must reallocate personnel, clerical service, supplies, and cash to that innovation. Very often no reallocation takes place. A bit of soft money on a year-to-year basis is the common approach to fiscal support.

In the competition for scarce resources, new programs must replace the old. A professor implementor-developer does not make these support/non-support

decisions. The administrator who does should be well informed on the merits of the proposed program and the programs nominated for termination. His decisions, like the decisions of a school superintendent, have great influence over the nature of what is taught, by whom it is taught, and where it is taught. Basically, his role must be concerned with instructional improvement. Normally, few new programs are developed in any one year on campus. Thus, the university administrator should have time to remain abreast of, and serve as consultant to, each development effort. He should be charged with illuminating fiscal constraints and with establishing parameters in which program characteristics must be shaped.

State Education Department Personnel

Key subject area coordinators or organization specialists in state education departments approve, ignore, or censure public school change efforts. These educators often have access to funds, to channels of publicity, and to other resources required to stimulate a curriculum innovation or to push it beyond district boundaries and diffuse it throughout the surrounding region. Districts are not likely to attempt change if state department personnel are hostile, intend to evaluate innovative instruction by means of traditional test batteries, or require the old curriculum to be taught in addition to the innovative curriculum. Active state encouragement of the innovation, preferably with some financial inducement, is essential if the trail-blazing efforts of change-achieving faculties are to lead to replications by other school faculties in the state. Where school districts implement new instruction best, state department personnel recognize the leadership role of local innovators, attend inservice workshops with those innovators, visit and observe while the program is in use, and put other potential users in constant contact with the innovators. Teacher certification personnel at the state level need to examine, support, and encourage collaborative teacher training projects in similar ways.

CONCLUSION

Practitioners often have identified the barriers to change listed in this article. Practitioners readily write guidelines for surmounting those barriers. Less frequently are the guidelines logically sequenced, carefully defined in operational terms, and incorporated into a comprehensive installation strategy covering all activities and concerns ranging from the needs assessment stage to the final evaluation stage. Rarely are all the key people enlisted in the execution of a strategy for accomplishment of an educational innovation.

Will it cost more to achieve change by an explicit plan, especially one that employs a team approach? Is it worth the time it takes to create a strategy complete with phases, inputs, activities, decision-points, expected outcomes, etc.? It usually costs far more to gamble on inadequate, fiscally starved, poorly conceptualized strategies only to discover that the new program is not being used or is compromised beyond recognition. It is equally costly to invest university funds in professor time, graduate assistant help, and secretarial services associated with the development of campus/public school projects that never take root and flourish. A pre-planned team approach to educational change maximizes the chances that education majors and public school students will fully receive the types of improved learning experiences new curricula and organizational innovations promote.